Acts 2:15-21, John 14:12, Ro.8:19, James 5:7-8, Eph.4:12-13. God's protection for His own is shown in Ps.46, Ps.91, Isa.54, 2Sam.22, Heb.2:14-18.

In the chapters on the letters to the Churches of the world, we have seen the status of the worship in the world, and also the admonitions, warnings and promises to the various catagories of people, particularly as they apply to the end-time generation. John starts Chapter 4 with being called to the heaven in which God's throne is now situated (not paradise) to be shown things there which will develop future to 96 AD. He is then shown the status of worship there at the end of the Age period, and right away he sees there is an open door to heaven for all who will come. The time of the scene is prior to the breaking of the first Seal, prior to the blowing of the first Trumpet, prior to the taking up of the firstfruits group, and prior to the marriage of the Lamb. :3 - Around God's throne is the rainbow of covenanted mercy. :4 - the 24 elders are rulers (IPet. 5:1-2, ITim.3:1, 5), are mature but not necessarily aged. They have power and authority (having crowns and thrones), and their function is therefore governmental in heaven. They are individuals who speak (to John - Rev.5:5, 7:13) and sing (Rev.5:9). They are distinct from John, the 4 living creatures (4:9-10), the angels (5:11, 7:11), God's people (5:8), the redeemed (5:9), the firstfruits (14:1-5), and the Harvest group - either those to be resurrected (11:17-18) or still living (7:13-14). The elders correspond in number and function to that earthly group (Heb.8:5), the rulers of the Sanhedrin. The picture is that of the situation in heaven up to the time Jesus Christ takes up His sovereignty over the earth. These elders are the senior executive officers of God. Jer. 23:18, 22 and Ps.89:7 also speak of the council of the Lord (not the counselors, Ro.11:34). The office is a priestly one and they worship God as Creator (:11), as eternal sovereign (11:17) and as righteous judge (19:4). They play harps and sing (heavenly angels speak or say), they worship the Lamb and present the prayers of the saints and they also have the status of prophets (5:9-10 and 7:14-17). :5 - Out of the throne come lightening and thunder (judgments). :6 - The sea like glass or crystal is also mentioned in 15:2; it is before the throne of God, smooth and with no tossing of waves of confusion following the winds of false doctrine.

:7-8 - The description of the 4 living creatures is obviously symbolic and similar descriptions occur in Ezek.1 and 10 and in Isa.6:2. These living creatures are worshippers and in Ezekiel's vision the 4 living creatures are a type of the Body of Christ, also worshippers. To conform the Body of Christ to His design, the Lord does have a directive for His people for He is not leading us out of the confusion of man-controlled systems of limitations on God

He desires. Since He cannot remain honest if He shares His glory with any man, He will not do so. Truly it is all His glory and only His glory. Therefore, He can tolerate no mixture of what is from Him and what is offered by man, and therefore man's non-conforming or sinful nature must be consumed (Matt.3:10-12), before there is room for God's nature to fill the man. Such a transformation can only be effected by the cooperative use of power received from God. Man's best efforts are fruitless or at best, worthless (Matt.7:17-27).

In order to open the way to rapid spiritual growth, there must be an increasing awareness of the need and a willingness to give Christ's imparted word of wisdom to the foolish and rebellious, His word of knowledge to the troubled, His word of prophecy to the downhearted, His word of faith to those in need of healing and to those who are doubtful. Our Lord yearns to pass through you the best gifts and He knows which is the best for those to whom you minister. Of course, first there must be a willingness to be used for benefiting the other members of the Body, and then there must be a preparation to do so by cooperating with the Lord to attain that capacity through which He can do all He wished to do. Finally, there must be the physical placement in proximity to members of Christ's Body, in an environment which permits free and open ministry at any time, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, through whomever the Lord wishes to use. Some of you participate in such an environment, some of you don't. The result of frequent gatherings of members of the Body of Christ for the express purpose of worship <u>and</u> service <u>and</u> mutual building is rapid individual growth. Without the personal qualifying and participation in the building of the Body of Christ, personal growth in spiritual attainment remains limited or stunted. Without the removal of the limitations and prohibitions of man's organization, the coming out of the Babylon (meaning confusion) of man's systems, there cannot be the maturing which our Lord now is requiring of those He will use mightily in these last days of our Age.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE GREAT DAY

- Rev.4 -

The end-time moving of the Holy Spirit and the evidences of it have begun in our day and that moving will procede with greater and greater intensity into the Great Tribulation period, according to the promises. The <u>great</u> outpouring (Acts 2:17-21), <u>the</u> fulfillment of Pentecost (feast at the time of the wheat harvest), starts at the outset of the Great Tribulation. For God's people who have fully accepted His Way, this is the beginning of the new Age of peace and righteousness, though to most it will not look like it at the time. Other Scripture speaking of the great revival: Isa.58:6-14, 30:25-33, Hosea 5:15, 6:3, 2:14-23, Dan.12:4, Joel 2:11-32,

only to let us grope in uncertainty (Ps.68:16). He does not want His sheep to wander 'through all the mountains and upon every high hill' (from one sect and denomination to another) and be 'scattered upon the face of the earth' (Ezek.34:6). He speaks of those sheep who will be rescued from the false shepherds and no longer be a prey of those who would make merchandise of them, and He speaks of the true shepherds which He will set over His flock to feed it (Jer. 23:1-4, Ezek.34:7-12). We are now living in that cloudy and dark day and the Lord is fulfilling His promise, by inviting His faithful disciples to come out of the limitations of man's devising and to come into the freedom of God's provision.

Our Lord has a perfect plan for His Church-Body in this hour which is according to His Word, but Christians have not been willing to let Him teach them from His Word and His Spirit and He has not been able to reveal that which has been placed in His Word. Now, however, they must hear His voice, they must conform to that which He has decreed or they shall not be able to stand in the day that is coming. In that day everything built according to man's ways shall surely fall (Heb.12:26-29). Consider carefully, therefore, the unfolding of His plan for His Church in this day.

First of all, Christians are to let the Lord join them together in one Body, for only He can do the joining together and only He can set each one in the place and position of His choice. No one must try to fill a place not chosen for him, for that will create havoc in the Body. Each person is to let the Lord show, as he waits upon Him and His ministry, where each one's place is in the Body of Christ. While the Body is one, even as there is one Lord and one faith, because of geographic considerations and because of the numbers involved, all of the Body cannot be in one location at one time and neither could each member function as the Lord desires, if all had to be in one location at the same moment. Therefore, His plan is to divide the numbers of the Body into individual cell units or local assemblies. Each local assembly will function as a complete unit in itself, having no official relationship with any other local assembly. The only relationships between local units will be the spiritual bond which ties them together and the fellowship which they can have with one another from time to time. Each local assembly will be governed by its own elders who will be set in by the directive of the Holy Spirit through those apostles (special messengers) which are sent to establish and set all things in order. The plan is shown in Ezekiel 1 and also in the New Testament accounts of the Church.

The prophet Ezekiel was given a vision at the river Chebar in which he saw the Cherubim (four living creatures) lifted up from the earth (Ezek.1:19), and now today the Lord is again lifting up before His people a

vision of that which He desires. With this vision, He will give understanding and wisdom to know what to do and how to bring about the realization of the vision. Each of the living creatures is shown to have the faces of a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle (Ezek.1:10) and so shall the Lord give to His people courage, fortitude, wisdom and perception, and through applying these will His people fulfill that which is shown them.

The living creatures, symbolizing the dedicated, world-wide Body of Christ, moved at the behest of the Holy Spirit and only when the Spirit moved; otherwise they moved not (Ezek.1:12, 20). Shall not the Spirit of the Lord move mightily on His people to enable them in the work that He purposes to do, and shall He not cause them to go forth in His name to gain a mighty victory for Him? Note also the way in which the living creatures made a sound with their wings like that of a host which goes to battle (Ezek. 1:24), for the Lord will send forth His people as a mighty host to do battle for Him in this day. Their voice shall be heard as the voice of the Almighty.

Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord and he saw Him sitting above the firmament upon a throne (Ezek. 1:26-28). The throne symbolizes rulership and the authority which Christ exercises in His Body, for it is written that Christ is the Head of the Body and a body is to receive its direction from the head (Eph.1:22-23). All of the Body is to be in absolute subjection to the Lord, or what He plans to do will not be accomplished. The firmament seen under the throne and over the heads of the living creatures indicates the expanse of Christ's protecting love. In that expanse of firmament He will have His angels on duty to keep and protect from all harm. From the throne shall all things be directed to carry out that which the Lord has purposed, and no one shall be able to stop that which He will do as His people are sent forth. The firmament also is a type of the 'spiritual atmosphere' which must pervade everything that is done in the Body. Without a spiritual 'air' pervading all the functions of the Body, there can be no spiritual operation of the Body. This is why it is so important for Christians to seek the Lord's face constantly, to be instant in prayer at all times, to let their praises ascend continually to Him and to live daily in His Word. What He is revealing is a spiritual plan for a spiritual people and it cannot work among those who are not living on a high spiritual plane. The plan is not for those who are still walking as men and living on the level of the carnal.

Under the firmament, Ezekiel saw four living creatures which are a type of the world-wide Body of Christ as it functions at the direction of the Holy Spirit. Did not the living creatures continue to move forward until they were stopped by the Spirit (Ezek.1:12)? So shall the people of the Lord move where He sends them and they

shall stop when He shows them, and they shall continue to come and go at His directive until all that He has determined is fulfilled. The plan of the Lord cannot be thwarted. He will be in the midst of His people and He shall be a wall of fire to protect them (Zech.2:4-7), and they shall consume their enemies before them (Dan. 2:44). The fire which was between the living creatures shall go before them, and none shall be able to withstand the mighty workings of the Spirit in their midst (Ezek.1:13-20).

Ezekiel observed that the living creatures were flying swiftly to fulfill the destiny which is determined for them to portray, even a swift work which the Lord will now do (Ezek.1:14). He will cause His Spirit to move on those whom He has prepared and will cause them to fulfill His purposes for this end-time. It will be a work swiftly accomplished, because all things have been made ready, and the Lord will make a quick end of all things. He will do a quick work and will cut it short in His righteous indignation (Ro.9:28, Matt.24:22).

The Lord pictured to Ezekiel the way in which His people are to be united together as the living creatures were united. When they moved, they all moved together (Ezek.1:9). They acted as one. They did not move individually, but they moved together at the direction of His Spirit. In the same manner, the Lord will have an end-time Body (smaller than the Body of all Christians) which shall move at His direction as one man. They shall be perfectly joined together to form that Body and Temple which shall be filled with His glory. Then these unified living creatures were shown being lifted up from the earth as they flew by the power of their wings (Ezek.1:19, 21). In a similar manner, will not the Lord lift up His people to Himself when the work is finished which He has given them to do? It is written that He shall lift them out of this world and change them and bring them into the heavenly realm and the heavenly glory (ICor.15:40, 51-53). The Cherubim are heavenly creatures, and to Ezekiel they pictured the Body of Christ which is filled with His glory and has its destiny and inheritance in the heavenlies.

When shall all these things be? Ezekiel was given an answer in his next vision, after he went out on the plain away from the river Chebar. Ezekiel was to lie upon his side 430 days, bearing the iniquity of God's people (Ezek.4:5-6). For us today, has it not been 430 years since the Lord began to move in power by His Spirit to bring deliverance from the bondage of the Roman system? Have not His true servants been bearing the iniquity of the people and speaking forth His Word since that time? Ezekiel was lying on his side partially bound so he could not go out of his house (Ezek.3:24-25), and so he acted out the partial deliverance of the people of God and the partial bondage

which has kept them from fully entering into the liberty of the message and ministry which has been reserved for this end-time. Ezekiel also set up siege works against the representation of the city of Jerusalem drawn upon a tile (Ezek.4:1-3). In this end-time the Lord is now preparing to bring destruction upon the earth, by allowing the enemies of Christendom to prepare siege works against all of Christendom. If you will count the years from the time of the Reformation begun by Martin Luther, when he began to go forth in power against the corruption in his day, and when those who were joined with him began to bear the iniquity of the people by receiving their reproach and wrath, you come to that time in which the Lord has made ready to begin His final work. That intervening period is in accordance with the number of days Ezekiel lay on his side, for the Lord appointed a day for a year (Ezek. 4:6).

During this period, Ezekiel ate his bread and drank his water by measure, while he was bearing the iniquity of the people (Ezek. 4:9-11). This picture illustrates more than one truth, but it does show that, during this recent 430 year period, the Lord had been dealing out the Bread of the Word and the Water of His Spirit by measure. Much of the time, there had been a great famine in the land and a great lacking in His people of that which the Lord is ready and able to give. However, the day is come for the Lord's people to eat freely, for He has made ready a great feast of spiritual things for those who will hear His voice and come to His banquet table. In fulness will He give the Bread of His Word and the Water of His Spirit in these days, and His people shall be satisfied.

Ezekiel bared his arm as a sign to God's people, and the Lord is ready to bare His mighty arm of wrath to the inhabitants of the earth, but He will also bare His mighty arm of protection and vindication for His people (Ezek.4:7). The Word of God shall certainly be fulfilled and His mighty arm shall get Him a victory over all His foes. As Ezekiel did keep himself from all the ways of the people, in their rebellion and stubborness of heart, so those the Lord has chosen today must separate themselves to Him, and, as Ezekiel, they must be willing to stand on their feet and speak the Word of the Lord. Those He is preparing shall be sent into a rebellious people (Ezek.2:1-8). Those He is preparing are not to seek to please man, but rather, they are to seek to please the Lord. Those who are men-pleasers shall surely not enter into that ministry which the Lord has reserved for His Ezekiel company in these concluding days of the Age. The fear of God rather than the fear of man shall be in their hearts, and they shall speak the Lord's Word with boldness.

Returning again to the picturing of the four living creatures (Ezek.1:10), each of the creatures had four faces. The face of the lion indicates the courage and boldness which the Lord will give to those who are

functioning in His Body according to the divine plan, and they shall have a kingly bearing of power and authority in that which they do. They shall go out with boldness and confidence and none shall be able to withstand that which the Lord puts within them. The face of the ox shows not only the fortitude which will be in the Lord's people, but also that the Lord's people are to consider themselves as servants of one another, for it is written that the greatest shall be the servant of all (Matt.23:11). Each one in the Body shall serve the others, each counting the other better than himself and with humility and godly fear not seek to exalt himself or take to himself, that which does not belong to him. This perfect plan will not work unless each one is willing to be the servant of all.

Then the face of a man pictures the end-time Body of Christ coming into the fulness of stature of the man Jesus Christ, growing up in all things to the Head of the Body, even the fulness of Him that fills all in all (Eph.4:13-15, 1:23). This end-time Body shall be as one man, functioning in the fulness of that which the Lord has planned for this Age and time. As the human race was brought forth in the image and likeness of His God at the close of the 6th day of the creative week, so will the Lord bring forth His Body in the fulness of His stature at the close of the 6th day of the redemptive week or cycle. As man entered God's rest from His creative work, prepared on the 7th day, so shall our Lord's people enter that rest from His redemptive work prepared for them on this redemptive cycle, the great 1000 year Millenium which is at hand. But first these people must reach that standard of perfection set for them and first must they be brought into the image and the likeness of Jesus Christ. Even so shall the Body come into wisdom and maturity and will be ready to show to the world that which the Lord has determined.

And the living creatures also had the face of an eagle, for it is written that His people shall mount up with wings as an eagle (Isa.40:31). An eagle is able to soar to heights where few creatures ever reach, even the very heights of the heavens. So will the people in these last days, who function according to the plan, find themselves soaring into the heavenly places in Christ (Eph.2:6). Those who will prepare themselves will be enabled by the Lord to mount up, and they shall have the visual resolution of an eagle to see that which has never been seen before. They shall have the endurance of an eagle to endure that which will come against them and not be afraid of the storm which is coming. They shall set their 'wings' and soar into the heavens on the very winds which carry the power and force of the storm, and they shall ascend to the heights in Christ where the storm will not affect them, and they shall overcome all things.

Ezekiel saw that the living creatures each had 4 wings (Ezek. 1:6, 11), two outstretched to touch the wings of the others and two covering the body of each. It is written that the Lord will

stretch out His wings to cover you and His wings shall protect you (Ps.91:4), and it is written that the woman was given the wings of an eagle to carry her into a place of safety (Rev.12:14). So shall the Lord protect and overshadow and so shall He be a protecting shield to keep those who are especially His from all harm in the day when the storm clouds are heavy on the earth.

And Ezekiel saw the hand of a man extending from under each wing on the living creatures (Ezek.1:8) as a type of the ministries which will be set in the midst of the world-wide Body of Christ to care for its needs and to guide it in the right path. There are 5 of these ministries, just as there are 5 fingers on the hand. First is the apostle (special messenger), a foundational ministry (ICor.12:28) primarily to reveal God's will and also to establish His people in God's divine ways. The apostles are first in the Body, because it cannot function in the divine pattern until apostles have made known God's will and revealed His truth to the people. Therefore, apostles are being raised up in this day to declare God's will for His people, to set His house in divine order, and to show His people what is required of them to keep them from going astray. Those who are apostles will go from place to place to establish what needs to be established and to set in order what needs to be set in order.

Then there is the prophet (ICor.12:28), also a foundational ministry (Eph.2:20) to reveal God's will and to make known His plan, usually in connection with the apostle, but not always. The prophet is especially endowed with a ministry in the word of prophecy, and the word shall flow from his lips as the very Word of God by direct inspiration of His Spirit. These prophets will be matured ministries, tried and tested, called and sent forth, and not those who are only prophetic ministries in the making. The prophet will also teach the deep things of the Word, especially as they relate to the events of the hour and the fulfillment of God's purposes in the earth. He shall have deep insight into the needs of people and shall be able to discern that which needs correcting or changing. He shall speak God's Word fearlessly, yet in love and compassion as he seeks to minister to the needs of the Body of Christ.

Then there are the teachers (ICor.12:28), first of which is the evangelist (Eph.4:11) who is a teacher of the redemptive truths relating to the needs of the Body of Christ and to the outreach of that Body to encompass those who are unsaved. He shall preach the Word with power to exhort and admonish and encourage the people in their witness for Jesus, and he shall unfold to their understanding the ways and means of sharing their faith with those around them. The evangelist will also have a ministry of deliverance so that the word he preaches shall be confirmed and established in power. He too will have a great compassion for the people of the Body, and also for the unsaved

that they might be brought into the fold. Second in the classification of teachers is the pastor who will be closest to the people in ministering to their personal needs and in counseling with them on spiritual problems. He has the true shepherd heart, desiring to wait upon the people and patiently lead them into green pastures and by still waters. His ministry in the Word will be primarily one of taking the general principles of truth and making them applicable to the personal lives of the people so that they might enter into the reality of spiritual blessing and power. He will be constantly on the lookout for the little lambs needing attention, binding up their wounds and caring for them in their time of need. Third in the classification of teachers will be the teacher who is one par excellence, one who will be able to take the Word to the people and make it real to them, breaking it down into its many parts and showing its application to all phases of life. He shall be a master at clarifying the many little understood passages of Scripture and making them live for the people. He shall have great concern for the growth and maturing of each member of the Body of Christ that <u>each</u> member might function in his proper place and come into his full ministry. Their ministries are to be available to the world-wide Body of Christ, and they are not to be tied to any one congregation or assembly -- not even the pastor. Their responsibility is the reinforcing of the larger Body (Eph.4:12).

Ezekiel saw that each living creature moved straight without turning and in whatever direction they went, they went straight ahead without variation (Ezek.1:9, 12). This is what the Lord demands of those who would be His end-time Body; they must go as the Spirit directs and they must not turn to the left or to the right. There must be no variableness or shadow cast by turning, even as the Lord Himself (James 1:17). They shall set their face, even as the face of the cherubim, in whatever direction the Spirit shows and then proceed without wavering and without turning. Ezekiel also saw fire in the midst of the living creatures (Ezek.1:13) and so shall the Lord be in the midst of the Body as a living, consuming fire to continually purge and cleanse, and as a refining fire to purify from all defilement so that His people shall be prepared to offer Him an offering in righteousness (Mal.3:3). So shall the fire of His Spirit burn in the midst and no sin will be allowed to continue unnoticed and unchecked, for a little leaven leavens the whole, and all the leaven of malice and wickedness will be purged out from the midst of God's people (ICor.5:6-8).

The legs of the living creatures were as burnished brass and they were straight as pillars (Ezek.1:7). The Lord is building His Church in this end-time and He is placing in that Church those who are to be pillars, even those who have overcome all the defilements of the flesh, and they will be recognized as pillars. They will be the

strong ones in the Lord, those who can be depended upon and on whom the weak ones can lean. And the feet of the living creatures were like those of a calf, for it is the calf which is created to serve others by providing milk and nourishment. So shall the pillars in the church provide sustenance and support to all who have need, and then they shall make the Body of Christ strong in the Lord. They shall not waver in times of testing, but they shall be steadfast and uphold all who are in need.

Beside each of the living creatures, Ezekiel saw what appeared to be a wheel within a wheel, and each wheel's rim was full of eyes (Ezek.1:15-18). These wheels moved when the living creatures moved and stood when the living creatures stood, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels (Ezek.1:20-21). Here also is pictured their oneness, but in a different phase of the same truth. The living creatures picture God's plan for the Body of Christ as a whole, but the wheels beside them represent the individual local assemblies or cells of the Body as they are gathered together in a particular geographical district. They are one with the whole Body and yet they are separate in location. Even so the Lord will cause His Body to find its expression and function in the individual local assembly or cell unit.

Each local assembly of saints shall begin as a wheel within a wheel, the inner wheel comes first and corresponds to the nucleus of a cell in the human body. That nucleus is the heart and substance of the cell around which the rest of the cell is formed. Each local assembly shall begin with a nucleus which the Lord will first firmly establish and join together. The nucleus will begin meeting in a specified meeting place, preferably a home because of its convenience and availability, to minister <u>to the Lord</u> in praise and worship. The Lord will join together those He wants in each nucleus so each person must seek His directive to determine where the Lord wants him to be. None shall seek his own will or desire, but only the Lord's will. A nucleus can begin with two or three families meeting in a home on the Lord's day. Those meeting together shall subject themselves together in love, none seeking to dominate or force his will on the others, for mutual fellowship in the Lord and study of the Word are to constitute the basis of each meeting.

If not immediately available, in due time the Lord will send one of His ministries to teach each nucleus that which He would have it to know. In time also, He will send one of His apostles to set this nucleus in divine order and to appoint those who are to be the elders or overseers of that group. Therefore, those in the nucleus shall be willing to receive those the Lord sends to them and let the Lord establish them as He purposes. They shall not try to do something in their own wisdom and strength, but they shall wait on the Lord's counsel and leading and let Him provide that which they need and let Him minister

to them as He directs by His Spirit. In the process of time and only at His direction, He will cause each nucleus that is firmly knit and joined together and firmly established in His divine order with its local overseers to move into a more public meeting place which will be accessible to all whom the Lord would draw by His Spirit. It is written that the early local Church met in the temple and broke bread from house to house (Acts 2:46, 5:42), and that Paul taught them publicly and in homes (Acts 20:20). Therefore, the Lord would have two types of meetings for His people. When they are ready and at His direction, He will have them occupy a public place of some kind, where all will feel free to come and where sinners can come to know the Lord, and He will also have His people continue to meet in homes of one or more, depending on the size of the Body and the need, in order that they might break bread (literal and spiritual) and let the whole Body minister with each having his part (ICor. 12:25-27).

After the nucleus, or inner wheel, has moved out at the direction of the Spirit to quarters that are conducive to larger growth and which are more accessible to all, then the Lord will begin to add others to the nucleus to form a complete assembly or cell unit (one nucleus grows into one cell with one body of elders; a cell may include several home groups). This completion corresponds to the other part of the wheel revolving around the inner wheel, one wheel but with inner and outer components. But this plan will not work until the nucleus is firmly established and so joined together that nothing will be able to destroy it. Then and then only is it ready to become the functioning center of the larger assembly which the Lord shall build around it. No nucleus should move out to become the heart of a further work of God until it has received the directive of the Lord.

The eyes on the rim which stood above and encircled the wheel (:18) represent the local elders who have the oversight of each of the assemblies or cell units. The Lord is capable of providing the leadership needed and He has the judgment for raising up those within the local assembly who are to be set in as the 'governments' of His Body. The time has come for Him to set His house in order according to His plan, so that it might function according to His direction and not according to the direction of man. The time has come for His ministries to give up the little kingdom they have built for themselves and let the Lord use them to minister to His Body as He chooses, because the ministries are not meant to stay in one place indefinitely and usurp the function given to the local overseers of each cell. The Lord would Have His ministries cease trying to build something for themselves and let Him use them wherever He chooses. How long a ministry shall serve in a particular cell unit is entirely up to the Lord and not according to the ministries

desires or wishes.

The wheels (the local portions of the Body) and the bodies of the living creatures (the world-wide Body) function together as one unit, moving only at the behest of the Holy Spirit. This plan is for a people who are willing to be completely led by the Spirit, and it will not work unless each ministry will go only where the Lord directs and unless each member of the Body is willing to let the Lord set him in the place He has chosen for him seeking always the mind of Christ in everything. The whole Body of Christ everywhere shall function as one, with ministries flowing through and working with the whole Body wherever the Spirit directs, and with the mutual fellowship and participation of all the members in whatever place and whatever function the Lord determines for them.

The saints shall be gathered to the Lord and even now the gathering is in process, for He will gather together in one Body in this end-time those who have truly covenanted together with Him to do His will and to lay themselves completely on His altar of sacrifice. Sacrifice will be required in order to do that which the Lord purposes in this last day, and those unwilling to make this sacrifice will find a place in His scheme of things for this day, but they will not be a part of that end-time Body which will be filled with the fulness of His glory. He will take one here and one there and bring them to Zion, His true spiritual city, and He will cause them to dwell in Jerusalem (peace) and they shall build up walls and set in order those things which are lacking. They shall see His workings in their midst to erect an end-time temple that will be glorious beyond all that has been before. He will cause them to rejoice, and great will be the joy and the singing in their midst, truly a sacrifice of joy shall they make to their God. He is gathering together those upon whom He will pour out His Spirit, He shall come to them even as the latter rain and there shall be showers of blessing as never before. They shall be a people upon whom the glory of their God is <u>seen</u>, and the joy and rejoicing in their midst will be something to behold.

This is not something that is for those who will not let the Lord teach them and correct them and instruct them in His ways, for He will have a people who will let Him purge them completely from all that which hinders and defiles so that He can bring them forth in these last days a purified people, ready to do that which He will commission them to do. These shall be a glorious church with all spots and blemishes removed and all wrinkles taken away, and these shall go forth as a mighty army to conquer and to gain a great victory for the Lord. Surely He will find a people upon whom He can shower His Spirit and the fulness of His power in these last days. Therefore, those who gather together must abandon the former associations, for how can the Lord draw anyone completely to Himself when loyalties are divided? There must be the will-

ingness to be gathered together with those who have been given the same vision and the same understanding, for two cannot walk together unless they are agreed. If there is to be a walk in the fulness of God's glory and perfection for this last day, then there must be a withdrawal from those who would hold back. Let the Lord do the joining to those whom He has chosen, and do not seek to join yourselves to anyone or anything, because what the Lord will join together, no man will be able to separate. Those He joins together shall be joined according to His plan and purpose for each individual, and He shall set that one in the place where he should be. None shall aspire to the place or position of another, but all shall subject themselves to the Lord and to one another so that they can be formed into one Body in the Lord. Seek the Lord for His joining; do not join yourselves.

The glory of the Lord shall be manifested in these last days, in a demonstration of His presence in the midst of His people, and with it that glory will bring the fulness of His power to deliver, to cleanse, to redeem, to transform, and to fulfill His promises to His people. That glory will make them to be what the Lord has purposed, causing them to go forth in that which He has determined, and it will bring them into the fulness of that which He has prepared and purposed, even from the foundation of the world.

But the glory of the Lord shall return to His people only when a body has been prepared to receive it. Just as at the beginning of this Age a physical body was prepared to receive the glory in the person of the Lord of Glory (Heb.10:5), the very Son of the Father, so that those who saw Him beheld the glory of their God (John 1:14), even so in this day the Lord is preparing a spiritual Body to receive the glory which He will bring to His people (Eph.1:22-23). But first that Body must be set in divine order as has been ordained, and that Body must be complete in all of its parts. It must function at the directive of the Spirit, and be completely subject to the headship of Jesus, and only then will He fill that Body with the fullness of His Glory.

The glory of the Lord was manifested through the living creatures of Ezekiel's vision (Ezek.1:4, 5, 13, 27, 28), and these living creatures picture for us the reality and perfection of that end-time Body which our Lord Jesus Christ shall raise up to Himself. However, Ezekiel also saw that glory depart from the sanctuary when later the glory cloud moved with the living creatures as they were lifted up from the sanctuary which had become polluted by the ways and traditions of man (Ezek. 8:6, 10:16-22, 11:22-23). By this picture we are to know that the glory of the Lord cannot be associated with <u>anything</u> that is not conformed to His divine will. He was driven away from His sanctuary by the abominations committed in Ezekiel's time. He has also been driven away from the churches of this day so that the fulness of His glory is not

seen among them, not a single one, because His sanctuary has been polluted by man's traditions and by man-made ways.

Assuredly, the glory of the Lord will not return until He finds a body of people ready to be joined together according to His ways, but then He will cause that Body to become a glorious temple for His presence and that temple shall be filled with His glory. Ezekiel was given a vision of the new temple which the Lord will build, a vision containing many truths not to be made known at this time, because it concerns that which will transpire in future ages. But the vision shows a temple ordered and measured according to the Lord's directive and a temple representative of the end-time Body which He shall raise up to Himself and fill with His glory. Then Ezekiel saw the glory of God return to this new temple in the same manner as he had seen it depart from the old polluted one (Ezek.43:2-5, 44:4). These are prophetic visions of what the Lord will do, for His glory has departed from the polluted church systems of this day, but that glory will return to His end-time temple which has made itself ready.

How then shall the Body operate as it gathers together for worship and fellowship? First, our Lord Jesus Christ would have His people praise Him with their whole hearts, forgetting everything that would occupy their minds and their attention and seeking to make Him the center of their worship and devotion. He is a jealous God and He wants His people to be undivided in their thoughts as they come to worship Him. He wants them to draw close to Him as they praise Him from their hearts and as they sing and make melody from their hearts to Him. It is written that if His people will draw nigh to Him, He will draw nigh to them (Jam. 4:8), but will He draw nigh to if they do not draw nigh to Him? Can the Body function and minister as He chooses when He is not in its midst to direct and control all things and to bless by His presence? His people must worship and praise Him from the depths of their hearts, entering into His courts and drawing close to Him, and then, and only then, can He make Himself available to direct and bless in the midst of those who gather together in His name.

Although the Lord is not detailing a schedule, or order of events, or a certain pattern, because there is a variety of ways in which meetings will progress at the direction of the Holy Spirit, the prophecy here presents the several elements which will be a part of the ministry of the Body of Christ as it gathers in His name.

In addition, the Lord would have His people pray to Him and make known to Him the petitions of their hearts. Having drawn close to Him in praise and worship, His Spirit will be drawing close and moving on the hearts of His people to offer Him prayers that are born of the anointing of His Spirit. Through the anointing, those He moves upon shall open their mouths and intercede on behalf of the Body, and shall cause the whole Body to be lifted

to the throne of grace and receive the guidance that is needed for the meeting. Also His people shall pour out their hearts to Him for those needs and burdens which He will place on their hearts, and they shall make known those petitions which are quickened to their understanding by the moving of His Spirit in their midst. By His people yielding themselves to be instruments of heart-felt, Spirit-directed prayer, He is enabled to move by His Spirit to bring into their midst the directive and the ministry that is needed. So shall His people be lifted and strengthened and blessed as their prayers ascend to Him as sweet incense.

And then He would have His people yield themselves to Him in the use of the gifts of His Spirit to edify and strengthen the Body (ICor.12:6-12). These gifts are for the upbuilding of the saints and for the fitting of the Body for the service which He has already planned. Therefore, the Lord would have His people ready to function in any way that His Spirit should direct to minister the blessings of His grace through supernatural utterance, or supernatural operation, or supernatural deliverance, by using the gifts of His grace. Each shall yeild by speaking forth that which the Spirit prompts him to speak in prophecy, or tongues, or interpretation, or he shall make known that which the Spirit quickens to his understanding in wisdom, knowledge and discernment, or he shall obey the promptings of the Spirit when moved upon to take hold of the workings of faith and healing and miracles, and minister these to whomsoever the Spirit should show. As you obey and act and speak forth that which the Lord makes known, so will He move by His Spirit to bless and deliver, for He has made the gifts of His grace available so that you may minister to one another and help one another. Therefore, He expects you to make yourselves available to His Spirit, in order that He might use you as an instrument in the meeting to minister the riches of His grace to the other members of the Body.

Then the Lord would have you search His Word and let Him speak through those whom He has set to be teachers among you, for His Word will nourish and sustain you and make you a fit vessel for His use. Spend much time seeking the Lord in His Word and let it dwell richly in your hearts as you share that which He has shown you. All may participate in the ministry of the Word, as prompted by the moving of the Holy Spirit. If you will respond to His plan, He will have those who are prepared and ready to minister that which He has shown for every meeting. If you will be sensitive to His Spirit, He will direct you to that which He would have you consider for each meeting. Sometimes the directive will be given through prophetic utterance on the nature and content of that which is to be brought forth. At other times the Lord will give the key to someone ahead of time who will have done some preparation along a certain line of teaching, and

He will quicken it to that person in the meeting. Sometimes the ministries present will be shown ahead of time what the ministry of the Word is to be for the meeting. Therefore, you shall all be subject to one another and seek the mind of the Spirit, letting Him bring forth the ministry of the Word which is ordered for your edification each time you gather together.

As you gather together, the Lord would also have you remember to give of your material substance for the support of those who have been called and sent forth. He would have you give to those who have been ordained to speak forth His message for this hour, and to those who have been sent forth to minister in His name, for as you give so will He bless you. He would also have you share with those who are in need and give to those causes which are doing a worthy work to the praise of His glory.

The Lord would also have you minister to Him by breaking bread and participating in the communion, for He would have His people regularly remember Him in the keeping of the Lord's Supper. This need not be made a part of every meeting, but only when He gives instruction by His Spirit. This time will always be one of special dedication and heart-searching, for the Lord would have you consider seriously the meaning of this observance. Much benefit to the whole Body can be gained if this celebration is entered into with understanding, discernment and yielding to Him, but much judgment can come if you do not fully enter into the reality of the sacrifice which the emblems represent and if you fail to appropriate the cleansing and healing which they depict. It shall be a special time of heart-searching, confession and petition.

Shall the Lord's people not be joined together, so that each may minister in the capacity that He has given? Then when you come together, do not seek to minister except as He enables you and directs you by His Spirit. And be careful not to interject that which is of your own flesh and your own desires, for those He has set in the Body to guide and to shepherd shall be quick to discern and quick to correct that which is not in harmony with the Spirit. In His plan and provision, you shall make yourselves ready to minister as the Spirit directs so that each meeting may be a glorious experience in the presence and fellowship of your blessed Lord and Savior.

In this end time, there is a spiritual plan for a people who are willing to be completely led by the Spirit. What the Lord has revealed He will fulfill and accomplish, if we will only make ourselves available and if we will obey Him in everything He shows us to do. But having begun to see the light by revelation of the Spirit, let us be very careful not to try to fulfill that which we have seen by the wisdom and energies of the flesh (Gal.3:2-3). What the Lord has been willing to put up with, or even use in a measure in the past, is different from

what He requires today. God is a perfectionist and He will not settle for anything less than His perfect order for His Church. It is a matter of record that this Church Age cannot end until all which is revealed in His Word is fulfilled (Acts 3:20-21). The times of our ignorance God has overlooked, but now He commands us to repent and change our ways in the light of that which He is revealing. To say we were walking in God's revealed light last year does not mean we are walking in His full revealed light today; we must continue to walk in the light as the Lord gives us further understanding and illumination of that which He wants. If we feel we have already arrived at the ultimate of what God wants, then we will surely miss His perfect will for His people in the closing years of this Church Age. What we have known in the past is not sufficient for now, and what we know now will not be sufficient for the tomorrows. Only as we walk in the full light of that which He is revealing and will continue to reveal, can we have full fellowship with one another and continue to progress in His plan for this end time (ICor.8:2).

Of one thing we can be sure, God is not interested in trying to remake the old. The church systems of the past have served their purpose and are still serving a certain purpose, but they are old garments upon which God is not going to put a new patch, and old wineskins into which He is not going to pour His new wine (Lk.5:34-39). The Lord wants local Churches established according to His divine plan and order. He wants a people who are willing to come out of that which they have known before escaping from their limitations on God's plan, and a people who will begin to walk in the new light He is giving for His people in this hour.

Study these prophecies again, and you will see a revealing of that which the Lord wants when His Body begins to function in His divine order, with each local assembly or cell unit having come to the place where its own elders are set in by the Holy Spirit, and where the ministries are being led by the Spirit to minister wherever the Lord directs and for as long as He deems wise. God has provided ministry for every need, but each ministry is limited to that which he can contribute to the Body. He is not complete in himself. So the ministries shall flow through out the whole Body in the many localities being free to go where and when the Spirit directs for meeting the needs. We must remember that we are now in a period of transition and very few local churches or assemblies are yet functioning in God's divine order. Therefore, we must be patient and let the Lord set His house in order, as He reveals His plan. We must not try to do or to build something on our own. Those who want to be a part of that which the Lord is doing should meet together with others of like mind and seek the Lord earnestly for His directive, waiting for Him to send the ministries they need. If the Lord

directs them to call for a particular ministry to help them, they may do so, and in the Lord's time and providence he will be sent.

Any ministry may be used to help begin a local assembly or church, but only an apostle can appoint those who are to be elders, and this only by the revelation of the Spirit. Great havoc has been wrought by man-appointed elders, as well as by man-appointed ministries. There should be no attempt to ordain elders in any specific place until the Holy Spirit appoints them through apostolic calling. Any ministry who is used by the Lord to help establish a local church retains the official and spiritual authority over that group until the Holy Spirit sets in elders. The ministry then relinquishes his sole authority and works with the elders or shepherds to build up the Body of Christ in that place. He will continue to come forth with greater spiritual authority because of the ministry which the Lord has given him, but his official authority will be limited to that of an elder among elders. After the Holy Spirit has set in elders, the ministries must be sensitive to the Spirit to know how long they are to continue their ministries in that place, realizing that the Lord may want them to minister to other groups and to send other ministries where they have been. Where can you find a plan more perfect than this, a plurality of local elders working together to feed and guide the flock, and a variety of ministries ready to come at the Spirit's direction to do that which is not within the calling of the elders to do.

The Lord will restore all that Satan, the devourer, has taken away (Hag.1:4-11, Joel 1: 6, 2:12-13, 18-19, 23-29), because only as there is a restoration of all that is lost can there be a fulfillment of all that God has purposed. The Lord will restore, and through that restoring will His people once again eat the good of the land and enjoy the fruit of that which He has given them. He will restore His true shepherds and will cause the false shepherds to cease and will remove them from being shepherds over His people. He will raise up shepherds who will feed the flock and lead His sheep into that good land which He has prepared for them. These shepherds are the true ministries who are called and ordained by the Lord and who shall be restored to His people: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and the teachers. But these shepherds are also the local elders whom God will raise up from the midst of His people to care for the sheep when the ministries have done the work committed to them and have gone.

Now let us return to Rev.4. The 4 living creatures pictured in Rev. 4 are not angels (Rev.7: 11), they are nearer to the throne than the 24 elders (4:6) and they are the leaders in worship (4:9). We have seen that the fully matured Body of Christ

is to be joined to Him as co-heirs and is to inherit superior positions over angels (Heb. 2:6-8, ICor.6:1-3). The earthly Body of Christ now being prepared is described in almost the same imagery as these beings in heaven. These in heaven are the heavenly counterpart of the Body of Christ yet to be brought to the throne, for as it is in heaven, so it is also on earth (Heb.9:23).

- Rev. 5 -

This portion of prophecy tells about the preparation for the opening of the 7 Seals. The scene is in heaven, the time is before the Seals are opened, and as yet there are no overcomers seen in heaven (John 3:13, Acts 2:34, Ro.2:11). :1-4- The sealed scroll is lying in the right hand of the One on the throne and it is the right hand which is the active and predominant hand. What is in the rolled-up scroll and what can be observed by the progressive loosing of the Seals, one by one? Scripture speaks of other scrolls as symbols of something the Lord is going to do, if the conditions of the moment persist. In Ezek.2:9-10 there is a scroll with writing on the front and back, words of mourning, lamentation and woe; Zech.5:2-4 speaks of a scroll containing a curse that goes forth out over the whole land; and Jer. 32 and 33 tell of a scroll and prophecy which recite the record of inheritance and re-establishment. :5- Under these Seals are preparations and remedial judgments; therefore, only Jesus Christ could be worthy to open the Seals and accomplish the preparations to carry out the judgments (John 5:22-23), because He has conquered. :6-7- Other Scripture records that Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God, next to His throne, and in that placement He is seen here (Col.3:1, Heb.12:2). He is also seen among the elders who are priests,for He was also appointed a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:5-6). It was the Lion of the tribe of Judah who prevailed to open the 7 Seals, but it was a Lamb who took the scroll from Him who sat on the throne and then opened the Seals (Rev.6:1). This picture shows the dual ministry of Jesus to be that of King and that of Priest (Heb.7:1-2).

As priest, He is the Lamb of God who gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice on the cross and who lives to make intercession for the redeemed (Heb. 7:24-27). As King, He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah who reigns on the throne of David (Isa.9:6-7, Lk.1:31-33), but during the dispensation of redemption, His Lamb ministry predominates. That is why He is seen here as a Lamb. As the end of the Age draws to a close and the Seals of Judgment are opened to bring an end to the mis-rule of man, it is His Lion ministry that begins to prevail, because Jesus as King begins to take over that which is rightfully His. . . . He begins to exert the power

and authority given Him after His resurrection (Matt.28:18), in such a way as to completely eliminate the usurpation of Satan-controlled man, and begins to exercise His own right as King. It is during the end-time period of the Seals and the Trumpets that forces of judgment are set in motion to effect an utter collapse of Satan-controlled, man-developed civilization, finally fulfilling Rev.11:15,"the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His anointed (Body of Christ) and He shall reign for the Ages." But first, His Lamb ministry of redemption must be completely fulfilled for the present Age, even though His Lion ministry of Kingship begins to come to the fore. The Lion nature of Jesus' ruling authority must be made manifest, and this authority begins to prevail as the Seals are opened, but it does not completely dominate until all rival rule and authority has been put down.

This is also the pattern for each overcomer. First the pattern of the Lamb must be fulfilled by learning submission, humbleness, sacrifice and willingness to hear and follow the Voice of the Shepherd (John 10:27), or the Lion ministry of joint-rule with Christ will never be entered. But he who is fully yielded and prepared as a Lamb shall come forth in an end-time ministry of power, boldness and authority which is symbolized by the Lion. The initial exercise of the perogatives of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah brings not only judgment on man's civilization, but also brings out a people who will enter into the spiritual realms of ruling with Christ such as no people has ever experienced before and which shall cause a spiritual 'shaking' and revival unprecedented in human history. Great shall be the glory, power and dominion shown by the people who first come into the fulness of the Lamb nature of complete submission and then move into the Lion Ministry of the Lord's end-time glorious Church. The Lion ministry which results is the response of the 7 Thunders in manifesting the Lion-like nature of Kingly power and authority (Rev.10:3-4). It is the responding to the radiation frequency of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, speaking the Word of God in a ministry of power and authority and entering into the Lion-ministry of the 7 Thunders.

Yet the Lion and the Lamb must 'lie down' together in every member of the Body (Isa. 11:6). Unto the Lord Himself, they shall ever be submissive, obedient and hearing only His voice, Lamb-like; but to the world they will exhibit Kingly authority, ruling power, regal bearing and a Word ministry of spiritual vitality and dynamic deliverance, Lion-like. But this shall come forth only in a people thoroughly prepared by the Lord and who have learned to live and walk in the Spirit, giving themselves totally to the call of the Spirit upon their lives.

The Lamb is pictured with 7 horns (perfect authority and rule over all things in heaven and earth) and with 7 eyes (all seeing and with perfect knowledge) which are the 7 fold Spirit of God (the fulness of God's Spirit with Him and everywhere present). But these are also the 7 arch-angels under His rule who have authority over and who see over all the affairs of the earth (2Chron.16:9, Zech.4:10). :8-14 - The taking of the scroll by Jesus and the preparation to open the Seals, for setting the forces of judgment in motion begin a new thing in history. And then a new song is sung which is a pattern for the song of praise and thanksgiving now to be sung by overcomers.

THE SEVEN SEALS

- REV. 6 -

All but the seventh seal have now been broken, and the sealed scroll is now being rolled open for the revealing of God's purposes in this end-time. The Seal developments extend through the end of this Age and, as with many other portions of the Word of God, they have a double fulfillment. One fulfillment covers the period from the days of the increasing alignment of the church function with the powers of state in the 4th century to the end of our Age. The other is the short-term, end-time fulfillment beginning in the 1930's. God always conforms all things to the basic pattern of truth which is recorded in His Word.

The Seals are opened individually and the judgments described under the Seals are those which are initiated with each opening, and the forces thereby released at that specific opening continue to develop through to the end of the Age. God's plan is progressive and in His mercy He continues to give as much opportunity as possible for all people to turn to Jesus Christ. As each Seal is broken, the edge of the Scroll begins to unfurl. As the next Seal is broken, more is revealed of the writing under the previously opened Seal. And, in a short period of time, all 7 Seals are broken and the judgments under them are being exposed simultaneously, as the Scroll is rolled open.

:1-2 - When the 1st Seal was opened, John heard one of the four living creatures, which are closest to God's throne, call out, "Come". John was called to symbolically go to a certain geographical area where he could see what was to unfold on the stage of history. The first four Seals brought forth the symbolism of horses. In the Bible, a horse pictures the spirit of war and the power to make war (Joel 2:2-4), and these four horses and riders are for war and destruction. The opening of the 1st Seal revealed a white horse with a rider who had a bow, and a crown was given to him. This white horse speaks of the power of war or conflict and conquest with a religious motivation. The

rider is given a bow and crowned to go out conquering and to conquer. This pictures the rider's desire to go out and conquer, but he was not to fully realize the desired goal. The bow is an instrument of war, but sometimes the bow also pictures lies and deceits (Ps.78:57, Jer. 9:3) and false promises. Historically, this is the church-militant, the church which allied itself with military government and power to further its cause, with the excuse that its motive was to bring the Christian religion to conquered foes. Since the days when the church first apostacized and went into the state, committing fornication with kings and rulers and making the 'flesh' its arm, it has sought to further its interests by the power of the sword or bow. Millions have been slain down through this Age by the church-militant, as it has taken advantage of force and conquest in alliance with government power. This has been the white horse and its rider going forth through history.

In the end-time application, the white horse began when Mussolini, in a workable understanding with the Vatican in 1935, went forth conquering and to conquer. He did not gain all of his objectives when he set forth on his expansionist dreams, but the Seal was broken in its end-time application and the effects continue to the end. The forces here unleashed are those helping to gather the nations into 'Armageddon', and the stage is being set for titanic conflict as the forces bringing judgment are set in motion.

:3 - John was called a second time to "Come", and he was symbolically carried to another area of the world to see other forces into judgment set in motion. :4 - The 2nd horse is red, and flaming red is one of the colors of Satan. The rider was empowered to take peace from the earth so that men would slaughter one another, and he was given a great sword. There is but one force that holds the responsibility for <u>continually</u> taking peace from the earth ever since it raised its ugly head. The 2nd Seal was opened when Red Russia began to foment revolution and division in <u>other</u> countries (1935-36), and this is why the rider of the red horse was given a great sword. The sword is a symbol of <u>division</u> through revolution, as well as through outright attack, resulting in much bloodshed. Dictator Stalin set the red horse fully in motion and the communist revolution has continued to foment strife, conflict and warfare ever since. The pattern continues to the end. The red horse rider has been given the power to take peace from the earth and so there will be no way to live in peaceful 'co-existence' with communism. Nations will either stand up and fight or be conquered. There will be peace no more until the Prince of Peace comes and the red horse rider is no more. As the beast system gains ascendency in the earth and as the false prophet

re-organizes the United Nations into becoming the system's front, there will be people and nations which will not wholly submit, and there will be continuous bloodshed throughout this reign of terror.

:5 - When the 3rd Seal was opened, John was again invited to come and he saw a symbolic representation of yet another geographical area of the world. He then saw a black horse and its rider, who had a set of balances in his hand. And John heard a voice saying, 'A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penney, and see that you do not hurt the oil and the wine'. In the same period of time which saw the ascendency of Mussolini and Stalin, another violent dictator arose to plunge the nations into conflict, releasing forces which have helped to pave the way for the final 'Armageddon' of nations. German compulsory military training became law in 1935, and the Rome-Berlin Axis was formed in 1936. In Hitler's strictly regimented social system, black became the predominant emblem color of Germany. We have seen in the developmental process since World War II how national socialism, as it was practiced under Hitler with its one man tyranny and its superracism, has evolved into internationally oriented socialist statism in many countries. The balances in the rider's hand, plus the reference in verse :6 to measures and prices, indicate the extent to which the economy and the means of livelihood were completely controlled with rationing of all resources, channeling them into munitions of war. The controls were even more severe in the occupied countries where strenuous toil made possible only bare subsistence so that the conquered nations might be made subwervient to the Nazi war effort.

The incipient fulfillment of these shortages was in Hitler's Germany, but in the final manifestation, that of the false prophet who heads the beast of World Government, there is to be the more complete fulfillment. The balances portray the strict rationing which will be in effect throughout the world, because of food shortages, and nations having more will be required to share with those having little. The extreme economic inflation of that day is shown by the fact that the penny or denarius was the standard day's wage and the measure was about one quart. In the coming days of extreme world crisis, inflated money and soaring prices will bring about conditions such that the income from a day's labor for many will mean little more than a bare subsistence. But the inspired record adds assurance, 'hurt not the oil and the wine'. Regardless of the difficult times, the strife, war, bloodshed, privation and also much persecution of tho e who will not submit to the beast system, those who are fully Christ's will not be harmed. The oil, 100 fold Christians, and the wine, 60 fold Christians (Matt.13:23), will

have His absolute protection (Ps. 91). Of these, only those whose personal commitment includes laying down their lives for the sake of the Gospel will suffer harm of any kind, and that only when their time arrives.

Before considering the final horse and rider, we should probably see the significance of the first three as they relate to the developing world scene. In one form or another, the forces set in motion by the opening of the Seals continue to the end of the Age. These three horses and riders of our period of history are the end-time spirits of dictatorship of facism, communism and socialism. These feature central government control over all phases of living in the nation, with promises of solving all the people's problems and preventing other problems from developing. Peace and plenty are promised as a material imitation of Christ's spiritual promises, but in deceit and under the threat of force. First come the glowing promises, then it becomes apparent there is a barb of the 'hook' and it is impossible to withdraw. Then comes economic unbalance, then conflict and chaos, then ruthless suppression and then more conflict and chaos. The end-time spirit of dictatorship emphasizes the 'deifying' of the powers of autocratic rule. These governments recognize no rights of the individual as divinely given by the Creator and they are destructive of personal responsibility before God. They breed moral degeneration and spiritual insipidness and they lead to inevitable conflict and chaos. Not being of God, they cannot last; either they collapse under their own perverted weight in the midst of much bloodshed, or they die in agonizing conflict with each other.

With reference to the gathering of the nations to Armageddon, it is written that there were three unclean spirits like frogs which issued from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast and from the mouth of the false prophet (Rev. 16:13-14). These correspond to the first three horses and their riders, and respectively they are facism in a close relationship to an authoritarian church, Communism and National Socialism. Rome was the seat of the dragon, Moscow was the home of the beast, and Berlin was the dwelling place of the false prophet. These three horses and riders are pictured as the spirits of demons working signs, which go forth to the rulers of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. The nation of Israel is included in the gathering, as are most other nations. The demon or spirit power is not confined to the initial personification in one individual, but continues after he is removed from the scene. The same powers initially manifested in Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler continue in modified forms with varying degrees of influence, and they continue to create instability, power struggle and ideological

conflict which eventually will lead to all-out war.

:7 - At the opening of the 4th Seal, John is summoned once more to 'Come' and he sees another portion of the earth's surface in symbolism. :8 - He then saw a pale horse, black and blue, as if bruised, and its rider's name is Death and another by the name of Hades follows closely. Power and authority given these two over ¼ part of the earth to kill men with sword and with famine and with plague and with wild beasts of the earth. During the same general time period of the breaking of the first three Seals, another force rose up to vitally affect another portion of the world and took over China in an unprovoked conquest (1937). The Japanese Imperialist War Lords were the power of the Death-rider and the people of China were the ¼ part of the earth. The 'death-rider' continued in his vaunted success to strike Pearl Harbor and there engaged forces which led to his downfall, but the Death-rider was followed by another, the power of Hades (the Unseen), and to <u>them</u> was given power over the ¼ part of the earth. After China had been subjugated and weakened by the Japanese, the Satanic powers of Hades took over, following the Japanese exit. The replacement power was that of Communism (1949) and China continues to suffer under the scourge of the demonic powers of Satan's Unseen realm (John 12:31, Eph.2:2) through communist tyranny. Many are to die in conflict, by starvation, by familiar and new diseases and by wild beasts, not sent from God, but from Satan. God never sends evil; there is no evil in Him (Jas.1:13, Ps.5:4), but He permits it to grow from wickedness (Ps.94:23, Ps.7:14-16, Ps.141:9-10, 2Chron.20:22-25, Ro. 11:9). The pattern is each of the Seal developments continues and intensifies through to the end of the Age.

But do not be anxious, you saints, because of the evil doer and his way, for evildoers will be cut down like grass (Ps.37:2) and shall be cast into the furnace of affliction (Matt.6:30). But those who do the Lord's will shall abide for the eons (IJohn 2:17). Forces leading to judgment have been released which are beyond recall; the apoclyptic horsemen ride into the night; many martyrs wait under the altar; and earth itself quivers in orbit, anticipating release from sin's displacement. Angels on every hand minister to heirs of Salvation, dealing many for the Kingdom's finest hour, making ready for the down-pour from heaven in the midst of the clash of arms and fiery blasts. Trumpets sound their ominous warning to sleeping multitudes, drunk in the stupor of sin's dark night. But watching virgins are arousing, trimming lamps at the sound of the Bridegroom's steps. Watch, watch, watch, for the hour is late. Make haste while there is yet time to prepare so you will not be found wanting in the Age's decisive hour. Listen, for the Lord speaks to you to come into

the chamber and abide with Him.

We are living in the wonderful day when the Lord is beginning to move in a marked way among individuals of many denominations, both Protestant and Catholic. The comments offered here, therefore, are in no way a judgment upon individual Christians, nor upon many sincere ministers of Christ who may be doing the best they can. Only God can judge an individual's heart, and so we are forbidden to do so (Matt.7:1). However, Jesus did command us to judge what is right (Lk.12:57, 7:43). When we thus weigh or assess the present world situation in the light of God's prophetic Word, it is abundantly evident that the hand of God's judgment is fast descending upon Christendom and the organized church systems instituted by man. Jesus said He would thoroughly purge His threshing floor, gathering the ripened or matured grain into His barn, but burning the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt.3:12). The fiery crucible is rapidly coming as the inevitable result of modern Christendom being built too much with 'wood, hay and stubble' of man's ways, rather than with the 'gold, silver and precious stones' of God's ways. The work shall be revealed by fire (ICor.3:12-13).

Therefore, cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet and show My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins (Isa.58:1). This is God's commission to the prophet of Isaiah's day and to the prophet of our day. The sins of Christendom, like those of ancient Israel, have become a stench im the nostrils of the Almighty and His fury is arising (Isa.65:1-5, 30:27-28). Blow the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in My holy mountain, for the day of the Lord comes and it is close at hand (Joel 2:1). One of the purposes of the trumpet was to sound an alarm for war (Num.10:9), and so the trumpet is shown to be a symbol of the prophet's voice as he sounds the alarm of judgment coming through war. Proclaim among the gentiles, prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, I am strong (Joel 3:9-10). Today we can clearly see the Scripture being fulfilled among the nations. Even the previously small and weak nations, such as those in the Middle East, are feverishly arming.

Nobody wants war, but it is a fact that mankind as a whole is yet too carnal to live without it. War is the inevitable result of the greed, selfishness and covetousness of unregenerate human hearts (Jas.4:1-3). Peace is the fruit of righteousness (Isa.32:17), but for the wicked there is no peace (Isa. 48:22). God has decreed that those who make for themselves crooked paths, contrary to His will, shall not know peace. If the nations were seeking peace for righteousness sake, their efforts would be crowned with

success, but humans want peace so that they may live for their own selfish pleasures in forgetfulness of God. The increasingly rapid moral degeneracy of our so-called 'Christian' society is striking evidence of this. Therefore, the Lord has decreed that the sword shall come the third time in a third World War (Ezek.21:14), to the end that men shall, in their extremity, reach out for God and be severed from their carnal ways. See in this the mercy of God in His severity. He is not willing to lose any and He will even remove all 'things' from man so that by any chance man might turn and lean on Him. God warns His chosen people of the dangers of forgetting Him and of the inevitable consequences which would follow (Deut.8:11-14, 17-20, Judges 3:7-8, ISam.12:9, Jer.2:32, 3:21).

The words of Jesus in Matt. 10:34 and Lk.12:51 throw much light on God's purpose for this Age. He did not come to bring peace upon the earth, but a sword and division. The symbolic significance of the sword is that of division or severance (Heb.4:12). God's declared purpose is that man be pierced with the sword of truth and severed from his carnality. He must learn to divide and distinguish between truth and falsehood, righteousness and evil, light and darkness, and that which is of God and that which is not. Until he learns to submit to the 'sword' of division in this higher sense of moral and spiritual discernment and discrimination, he must experience the 'sword' of division in its lower phase of conflict, strife, suffering and sorrow, - up to the time he comes to himself (Lk.15:17) and turns to God for help and deliverance. Now do you see why the 'sword' of conflict and war is the inevitable consequence of man's slowness to learn and his stubbornness in self-will (carnality) to resist learning?

God uses the resultant suffering incidental to conflict to goad man into thinking, seeing his need, repenting and turning to the <u>only</u> source of true peace, God Himself. It would be well for you to go over the above thoughts several times, until you begin to grasp the 'whys' of God permitting those things which, from man's carnal and limited perspective, seem so cruel and unjust. God is not even slightly interested in man's clever philosophy, and His ways are not man's ways (ICor.1:19-20, Isa.55:8-9). He sees all things from the perspective of the ultimate and enduring good (Ro.8:28), and it is in His love for man that He has His purpose in the 'sword' doing its work. As long as man remains in his present state of carnality, there can be no prospects for peace.

Even now the idealogical conflicts, animosities and divisions among and within nations grow deeper each year, and, before the final showdown, the nations will be increasingly divided into two separate blocks, even though ostensibly they appear to be trying to

work together in a 'One World Government'. In Matt.25:32-33, the nations are pictured as being gathered together before the Lord, and He separates them to the right and to the left. Remember that most Scriptures have more than one application or fulfillment, and so we cannot limit this passage to the time when the individuals of the nations will be gathered before the Lord at a specific place and time. The word 'before' also can indicate that which is previous in time, and we shall see this increased separating prior to the Lord's return. The Greek word for 'gathered' means 'to lead together', and the same word is used in Rev.16:14, picturing the nations of the world being led together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. In Rev.16:13, the men who are instrumental in leading the nations together into power blocks are represented by the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. The initial end-time manifestation was the 'croakings' of Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler, which began gathering the nations into separate blocks. Since then the same unclean spirits are working through other leaders, and the coalitions have altered and taken a somewhat different form.

It is apparent now how the gathering is crystallizing into the communist block versus the non-communist nations, the 'sheep' nations of Christendom on the right and the 'goat' nations of communism on the left. It is even common to use the terms 'right' and 'left' to designate their alignment. However, within the nations of Christendom, there are many individuals who are strongly pro-left, for the communist elements have infiltrated every segment of our so-called 'Christian' society. There is purpose in it to the end that our desolation will be more complete, for we have sinned abominably in the sight of God. The red desolator is given a great sword and power to take peace from the earth (Rev. 6:4). Babylonish Christendom has been weighed in the balances and found wanting (Dan.5:27); therefore, the sword comes.

The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel to cause Jerusalem to know her abominations (Ezek. 16:2). It also becomes the divine duty of the prophets of our day to make Christendom come to know her abominations and the desolation that is coming because of them, for ancient Jerusalem is a type of modern Christendom (natural Israel expanded to spiritual Israel). However, because we recognize and emphasize the symbolic application of Old Testament Scriptures to 'spiritual Israel' or Christendom, it is not implied that they do not also have an application to natural Israel. In this ending of the Age, God will also call natural Israel to account for its abominations. It is for this reason, He is causing a representative number of Jews to return to Palestine

and re-occupy the city of Jerusalem. In the land of their fathers, they shall also experience the wrath of God through the desolating power.

The Lord told Ezekiel to inform the people that, in the day when He brings the sword upon the land, they are to set up a watchman. When the watchman sees the sword coming, he is to warn the people by blowing the trumpet. If they do not respond to the warning, their blood is not on the watchman's head, but as many as do respond, they shall see deliverance of their souls. If the watchman does not blow the trumpet when the sword approaches, the blood of the people taken in their iniquity will God require at the watchman's hand (Ezek.33:2-7). The prophet is the watchman and the trumpet is his voice to give them God's warning. The trumpet warning must go forth, loud and clear, for if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound. who shall prepare himself for the battle (ICor.14:8)?

Isaiah 28:22-29 illustrates God's dealing with man by the various means a farmer uses to thresh different grains. In the final 'harvest' and 'threshing' of the nations, not all nations or groups will be dealt with in the same manner, nor with the same degree of severity. Nevertheless, since all the nations of Christendom have 'sown to the wind', they will reap 'the whirlwind' in varying degrees (Hos.8:7). A whirlwind symbolizes revolution and/or civil war within. Evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. During that day, the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth to the other end, and they shall not be lamented, nor gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground (Jer.30:23-24, Ezek.38:21-23, Ps.79:1-3, Rev.16:18-21).

Those who put their whole trust in the Lord have nothing to fear, but there is the need to allow the Lord to prepare us, for the vast majority of Christians will have to go through these tribulation conditions on the earth. Jesus warned of the need for preparation lest we find ourselves suffering the 'stripes' or buffeting conditions of the Tribulation without the completeness of the Lord's protection and guidance (Lk.12:47-48).

:9-10 - In its end-time fulfillment, the 5th Seal (beginning about 1938) is the natural consequence of the developments from the arrival of the 4 horses and riders, because their forms of tyranny lead to much bloodshed, particularly among those having the conscience and the will to resist their encroachments. Such are they who truly have the Word of God and a living testimony, and the intensity of persecution and martyrdom increases until the end of the Age as the forces of entrenched evil gain greater dominion and boldness. John saw the souls of those initially martyred waiting at the foot of the altar, and

they are aware that judgment is being readied against the forces responsible for their deaths.

:11 - But there is a period of waiting yet. They are resting in that realm called Paradise, clothed in their purified (white) soul bodies, and waiting until the first or out-resurrection from the dead at which time physical bodies will be restored to them in glorified power and they will be received by the Lord into His heavenly Kingdom. The restoration of their glorified physical bodies will take place at the final sound of the 7th Trumpet, when those 'dead in Christ' are raised and the living saints are changed (IThess.4:16-17).

The altar for incense in Ex.30:6, 10 was an earthly copy of this heavenly altar (Heb.9:23) and it was kept outside the Holy of Holies, except on the Day of Atonement, at which time it was taken in as explained in the Mischna (Lev.16:12, 30, 34). Likewise the altar here (the same as in Rev.8:3) is not in the presence of God and the souls of those under it are waiting for the opportunity to come into the throne area. The outer portion of the tabernacle is a picture of this present Age (Heb.9:9) and the move into the Holy of Holies and into the presence of God comes at the end of the Age, on <u>the</u> Day of Atonement. In the New Age, some martyrs will reign and rule with Christ on earth in His earthly Kingdom, and some martyrs will reign with Christ from His throne in His heavenly Kingdom. God has reserved a greater reward for those who lay aside the desires of the flesh and the pride of this life, while there is liberty to enjoy them, than for those who decide at the last moment that they should not deny Christ and give up their physical life at the end.

:12 - When the 6th Seal is broken (1939-1940), John sees a great earthquake and a darkening of the sun and the moon. An ordinary earthquake does not produce these sun and moon phenomena, but there is one type of tremendous shaking which does when released on a large scale, - the multiple detonation of nuclear war-heads. When great amounts of dirt, debris and massive smoke clouds are injected high into the air by titanic explosions, the result is a blacking or browning out of the sun's light (sackcloth is a coarse weave of hair) and the moon would appear blood red at night. The opening of the 6th Seal, therefore has to do with the initial use of nuclear weapons, but this Seal also continues to carry through to the end of the Age, just as the others do. In its progressive development, the full force of nuclear weapon destruction on the world, which culminates during the judgment of the 7 Bowls of Wrath (Rev.16), is also pictured with the time span of the 6th Seal. Six is man's number and so it is appropriate to picture in his intrinsic number the complete effects of man's words apart from God. It is man who unleashes the awful fury of the atom, and it is man's civil-

ization that shall be destroyed by it.

Because the 'wrath of God' is to be visited upon man and upon his corrupt civilization by the destructive fire power and by the radiation from large scale use of nuclear weaponry, John describes this time as the great day of God's wrath in which few will be able to stand (Rev.6:17). The great day of God's wrath began when the first atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima, August 6, 1945, with massive destruction, but it will not be consummated until the 7 Bowls of Wrath are poured out at the end of the Great Tribulation. The delay in the full expression of God's wrath is effected by a hold order given to the 4 angels at the 4 corners of the earth who are instructed not to unleash judgment until the sealing angel has 'sealed' the servants of God in their foreheads (Rev.7:1-3). The 4 winds of the earth are used to illustrate the world-wide effects of atomic destruction, because the large scale desctruction is primarily by atmospheric shock wave and wind from the exploding bombs. The opening of the 6th Seal pictures the beginning of nuclear fire power, but it also introduces the great day of God's wrath, and in addition it envisions the final and catastrophic consummation, after the 'hold order' has run its course and the 'winds' are loosed.

The breaking of the 6th Seal brings on the rumblings prior to the great earthquake. Hag.2:5-7, Heb.12:26-29 tell of God's shaking the religious heavens, the financial heavens and all the earth (the organizations and systems of man) and all of these are a prelude to the great collapse of all that can be shaken. The shaking has begun. The great earthquake is both symbolic and literal; it is the total shaking and disrupting of all man's vaunted society and it is literal shaking of the earth. Both continue with increased intensity to the end of the Age, and so great will be the effects of massive explosions thru-out the earth that it shall reel to and fro like a drunkard (Isa.24:20). :13-14 - Because of the accelerations and gyrations of the earth, strange sights will be seen in the heavens. Also the abnormal movement of the earth during that time of great shaking will produce great windstorms which will add to the air forces from nuclear explosions, bringing violent atmospheric turbulence and upheavals. The violent atmospheric disturbances and the phenomena appearing in the starry heavens, because of the earth's erratic movement, will indeed bring that experience described as heaven departing as a scroll when it is rolled together. The great shaking and twisting of the earth's crust will also cause mountains and islands to be displaced. The symbolic content speaks of great spiritual darkness among the willfully rebellious (darkened sun) and great bloodletting by the rebellious nations (bloody

moon), but the stars of the sky (firstfruits) come down to earth in a ministry of power at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, and a timely ministry of testimony goes forth in spiritual and natural Israel, as the early fruits of the fig tree in the gale (Rev.7:4). God's wrath, coupled with man's inhumanity to man, culminates in the pouring out of the Bowls of Wrath and the destruction of everything that is not of God (Isa.2:19, 20). :15-17 - There is no turning to God in the days of the Bowls of Wrath, for the door will be shut (Lk.13:23-25, 2Thess.1:8-9, Zeph.2:1-3, Prov. 1:27-29), but there will be great anger against God as well as great fear of the results of His wrath. Who is able to stand before it? Too late they recognize He was indeed the Lamb (IJohn 2: 28).

- REV. 7 -

This section is still under the 6th Seal and it takes a closer look at <u>the Church</u> from just before the beginning of the Great Tribulation until its end. :1 - The 4 angels who stir up the nations (Dan.7:2, Zech.6:5) are given a hold-order before the start of the Great Tribulation. It is a holding back of disciplinary and destructive judgments, a delay in final destruction and waiting while the 'sealing angel' accomplishes a certain work. The 4 winds of the earth picture the world-wide effects of nuclear warfare, for it is the resultant wind action that brings large-scale destruction. :2 - The rising of the sun is the great outpouring of the fulness of God's brightness and power, the Joel 2:28 greater fulfillment and the angel carries the seal of the living God. See Rev.3:12 notes and Ezek. 9 on the Seal of God and the sealing. Either before or during the Tribulation, all who are to be received by Christ into His heavenly Kingdom and enter the New Jerusalem must be sealed on the forehead. The order of the sealings in Scripture is, 1 - with Christ's redemptive name, on earth (John 1:12-13, Jas.1:21-22, IPet.1:23); 2 - with the Holy Spirit baptism on earth (Matt.3:11, Acts 1:5, 8), which is the foretaste of the incipient sealing on the forehead for those who go on to receive the full impress of the mind of Christ and His preparatory work (Eph.1:13-14); 3 - impressed with the name of God, on earth, kept fully protected (John 6:27, 17:11, 23, Rev.3:12); 4 - with the name of New Jerusalem in heaven with a glorified body; 5 - with Christ's new name, in heaven, when ready to reign and rule with Him. "5" is the numerical signature of freedom, a release, for the Spirit has then done a complete work in the believer.

:3 - The 'earth' is the organizations of men, the 'sea' is the masses of people, the 'trees' are well-rooted leaders and rulers and therefore also nations. :4-8 - This sealing has two applications, primarily that of sealing the firstfruits group of spiritual Israel (Rev. 14:1), but also the later 144,000 group of physical Israel (the